



# autumnal enzymes

How can we satisfy our need for comfort food on a blustery dark night without degenerating into an orgy of hot chocolate and crumpets? Lovechefs Mark & Charlotte Mabon let us into a few 'raw' secrets which will keep us, and our tums, happy and healthy during these colder months.

**W**hen it's warm outside we are naturally attracted to cooling foods, so eating a lot of raw food in summer is easy (this is the yin and yang of the natural world). However, as the season turns and the nights draw in, the thought of cold lettuce and cucumber becomes somewhat less appealing. But the art of good diet is balance! So, let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater because, you'll be pleased to hear, it's still possible to maintain a high raw diet throughout the frosty months. It just takes a few little tweaks and twangles!

First of all, if you didn't already know, the reason raw food is currently the rage is due to its alkalising, enzyme rich and powerfully healing and nutritious properties. Because raw vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and grains still contain their own enzymes, they do not require enzymes from our own bodies for digestion. We therefore expend less energy in the digestion process, and hence, more energy – and enzymes – are left available for other body functions such as maintenance and healing. However, raw foods are, by nature, more cooling than cooked foods, so you are going to need some tips for adding warming properties to a high-raw diet.

## top tips

**Add warmth.** Your raw foods can be given a warm kick by using chilli, ginger and garlic, as well as spices such as cinnamon, cloves and cardamon. These are all warming by nature. Try grating ginger or garlic into your salad dressings, or add a pinch of cayenne pepper to your cup of herbal tea.

**Heat things up.** Yes, contrary to general belief, you can heat up raw food and not lose all the enzymes. Just make sure you don't exceed 115°F, as this is the point the precious enzymes will start to die off! Whether it's your bowl of raw porridge, raw pasta sauce or even a smoothie, pop it in a pan and gently warm it up. You're little finger is a great thermometer – if it's too hot for pinky, it's too hot for the enzymes!

**Go green.** Greens, especially kale, cabbage, parsley, watercress, collard, mustard and dandelion greens are your good friends in winter. Rich in chlorophyll, they help build new blood and support cell renewal. These regenerative qualities will fortify your body and give you a glow in the snow, so to speak. Try shredding kale or other heavy greens and then wilt them by

massaging with a little salt or vinegar. This makes them easier to both chew and digest.

**Break it down.** Grating, pounding, wilting and becoming an expert chewer are all ways of breaking down and subsequently pre-digesting the material of food. The nutrients held within the cell walls are more available to digest and, as less energy goes into digestion, more is leftover for keeping your body warm and toasty.

**Satisfy those cravings.** When the rain beats against your window pane, dense foods like nuts, sprouted grains and thick tahini dressings can be added to any salad to make them more robust, and satisfy those cravings for comfort food - and even a salad can be gently warmed. For a sweet treat, pound up some nuts, sweet dried fruits and spices and mould them into powerful little energy-booster balls.

**Break the rules.** If you're going to cook, there are many quick alternatives to a fried egg on toast (old habits can be hard to break!). Try adding steamed vegetables such as squash, parsnip, broccoli or sweet potato to a hearty salad. Add a splash of tamari or drizzle with a creamy dressing for a steaming, semi-raw, warming meal.

**Soup it up.** These can also be raw and warm (see recipe) or semi raw. For the latter, start in the normal way by cooking onions, spices and garlic; add hot water and turn off the heat. Once it's cooled down a little, add grated root veggies and shredded greens to the pot. Season well to broaden the flavours. Alternatively, if your making a traditional soup with cooked veggies, throw in a generous handful of shredded raw greens as a garnish.

The main thing is to find the balance that keeps you energised, happy and warm! When fighting the cold, the masters of natural medicine also say: "work on fears and insecurities, become more active, avoid long hot baths and keep your kidney area, legs and abdomen warm." Happy autumn!

The Lovechefs provide delicious raw and whole food catering for events, as well as teaching raw food preparation courses and retreats.  
[www.lovechefs.co.uk](http://www.lovechefs.co.uk)



## Ultimate Miso Soup (serves 2)

This recipe makes a rich, satisfying soup that only takes a few minutes to make and is perfect for a winter's day.

- 4 teaspoons unpasteurised Miso (any kind, but we like the lighter misos the best)
- 4 teaspoons tahini or nut butter
- 2 teaspoon of coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 small clove garlic grated (more or less - to taste)
- 1 teaspoon grated ginger

Mix the above ingredients together into a smooth paste. You can add a bit of warm water if you need to get it going.

Pour about 3 cups of warm water into a saucepan and stir in the paste. Be careful not to pour boiling water on the miso mix as you'll knock out all the enzymes!

Now add the ingredients listed below to the pot, put it on the heat and warm until it's just hot enough to be uncomfortable for your little finger (about 118 degrees if you've got a thermometer)

- 1 cup of finely sliced, cubed or grated vegetables of your choice (carrots, sweet potato, courgette, squash, beet.. etc.)
- A small handful of seaweed (we like wakame best)
- A few slices of fresh red or green chilli
- A handful of avocado chunks or some sliced sundried tomatoes (optional)

Turn off the heat and serve immediately in individual bowls garnished with some chopped spring onion and/or a handful of alfalfa or radish sprouts. You will feel warmed through...



## Raw Apple Crumble (serves 4)

- 6 apples, cored
- 8 dates soaked\* for a couple of hours
- the juice of one orange
- 1/8th teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- 2 healthy pinches of nutmeg
- 6 soaked\* apricots or raisins
- \*soak in just enough water to cover them!

Take 3 of the apples, chop them roughly and put into a food processor. Add all the other ingredients above (including the soak water from the dried fruit) and pulse until you have a slightly chunky slop. If you put the apricots/raisins in towards the end you get larger pieces, which is nice.

Chop up the remaining 3 apples quite finely and combine them with the sauce above. Set aside (if you've got time to leave the mix for a couple of hours or overnight for the flavours to really penetrate and the apples soften beautifully). Next..

- 1 cup walnuts
- 1 cup soft dates
- 2 cups of oats
- large pinch of good quality salt
- 3 tablespoons dessicated coconut
- 2 tablespoons coconut butter

Pulse the walnuts in the food processor until they're broken up but still chunky. Set aside.

Throw in the dates and whizz for a minute or until they're thoroughly mashed up. You might need to add a tiny splash of water to get them going. In a bowl mix the dates with the other ingredients including the walnuts, squeezing and massaging until you get a uniform, crumbly dough-like mixture. Spread the crumble mix over the top of the apples; it should make a nice thick layer.

For added winter comfort put the dish into an oven no hotter than 118 degrees for about 10 - 15 minutes to warm it through. Serve as it is or perhaps with a dollop of cashew creme (if you're so lucky). Alternatively try it with some live yoghurt or maybe even a spoon of creme fraiche, if you're that way inclined!